

Amendments to the Claims:

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1. (original) A steroid hormone product having improved dissolution and release rate properties, said product comprising a steroid hormone ~~in substantially non-crystalline form~~ in admixture with an excipient, wherein substantially all of said steroid hormone is in non-crystalline form and wherein said excipient ~~stabilizing~~ stabilizes said hormone in its ~~substantially~~ non-crystalline form.
 2. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 1, wherein the primary excipient is selected from the group consisting of dextrose, fructose, sorbitol, xylitol, sucrose, lactose, mannitol, dextrate, cellulose, starch and mixtures thereof.
 3. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 1 wherein the steroid hormone is at least one of a progestin and an estrogen
 4. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 3, wherein the steroid hormone is a progestin selected from the group consisting of norgestimate, norgestrel, levonorgestrel, norethindrone and desogestrel.
 5. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 4 wherein the steroid hormone is norgestimate and the excipient is lactose.
 6. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 3, wherein the product is one of an oral contraceptive product and a hormone replacement therapy product.
 7. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 6, wherein the product is an oral contraceptive product comprising from about 10 μ g to about 50 μ g of an estrogen and/or from about 50 μ g to about 300 μ g of a progestin.
 8. (original) The steroid hormone product of claim 7, wherein the progestin is

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norgestimate and the excipient is lactose.

9. (withdrawn) A method of preparing a steroid hormone product having improved dissolution and release rate properties, said method comprising the steps of:
- preparing a mixture comprising at least one steroid hormone and at least one excipient;
 - imparting to said mixture sufficient mechanical energy to yield an excipient/hormone powder blend wherein the hormone is stabilized by said excipient in substantially non-crystalline form; and
 - forming said product from the powder blend.
10. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein at least about 0.1 hp-min/kg of mechanical energy is imparted to the mixture to form the powder blend.
11. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of imparting mechanical energy to the mixture is further characterized in that the mixture is subjected to high energy blending.
12. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the mixture comprises a hormone/excipient ratio of from about 1/1 to about 1/10.
13. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the primary excipient is selected from the group consisting of dextrose, fructose, sorbitol, xylitol, sucrose, lactose, mannitol, dextrate, cellulose, starch and mixtures thereof.
14. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the steroid hormone is at least one of a progestin and an estrogen.
15. (withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein the steroid hormone is a progestin selected from the group consisting of norgestimate, norgestrel, levonorgestrel, norethindrone and desogestrel.

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concluded
16. (withdrawn) The method of claim 15, wherein the steroid hormone is norgestimate and the excipient is lactose.
17. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of preparing the mixture includes the steps of:
- preparing a solution of the hormone in a suitable solvent;
 - uniformly mixing the solution with the excipient; and
 - removing the solvent.
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